

ARCHAEOLOGY IN GREECE 2015–2016

New museums, exhibitions and site presentations

Maria Stamatopoulou | University of Oxford | maria.stamatopoulou@classics.ox.ac.uk

Since 2009 Greece has faced one of its most challenging phases in modern history; the financial and social crisis has affected all sectors of society and spending for cultural activities has been significantly cut. Although there have been museum closures and funds for research or even day-to-day needs are in short supply, nevertheless, very serious and creative work is being produced quietly, often with the aid of European Union co-funded projects, through the so-called Εθνικό Στρατηγικό Πλαίσιο Αναφοράς (ΕΣΠΑ), or National Strategic Reference Framework. The schedule and deadlines for such projects are very tight and working conditions challenging, but the results have often been exceptional in quality, revealing hard work, effective management of people of various specialisms and scholarly expertise. The period 2015–2016 has seen the opening of many new major museums, the result of many years of planning and hard work, and the organization of temporary exhibitions, through which the finds of the last decade have become accessible to the wider public. In this feature I concentrate on a brief presentation of the new museums that have opened this past year, news that will interest not only students and academics, but also other visitors to Greece. Colleagues in the various relevant ephorates of antiquities have been very generous in providing information, and so I have decided to leave their texts largely unchanged. I begin with a brief presentation of new museums, before moving on to discuss temporary exhibitions and a few key archaeological sites.

New museums

Diachronic Museum of Larisa (DMA)

The following account is based on information kindly provided by Stavroula Sdrolia, Giorgos Toufexis and Stella Katakouta.

The Diachronic Museum of Larisa (DMA) lies on the southern edge of the city on the Mezourlo Hill and opened to the public on 28 November 2015. The complex, built on land offered by the Municipality of Larisa, was founded in 1996 and completed in 2006. The DMA covers an area of 11,750m² and includes a permanent exhibition, seminar and conference rooms, storage and conservation rooms, an educational programmes area, the offices of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa and a library. The permanent exhibition was implemented under ΕΣΠΑ 2007–2013 (*AR* 57 [2010–2011] 76; see also the museum website: <http://larisa.culture.gr/siteapps/joomla-20418/htdocs/index.php/mouseia-kai-ekthesiakoi-xoroi>). The permanent exhibition covers an area of 1,500m² and displays antiquities from the entire region of Thessaly, from the Palaeolithic era to *ca.* AD 1830. These are arranged in 11 sections following a roughly chronological sequence and are organized around four themes: society, state, institutions and authority.

The first, introductory, section familiarizes the visitor with the natural environment of Thessaly, especially the fertile plains and the river Peneios – the region's lifeblood – through digital media, maps and photographs. The earliest traces of human presence in the region date to the Lower Palaeolithic period and include tools of quartz and flint, such as worked pebbles, flakes and scrapers. These are typically found in outdoor locations, probably seasonal hunting camps. A large section is devoted to a presentation of Neolithic culture in Thessaly, which is particularly well-known and well-studied (**Fig. 41**). The rich Neolithic collections on display come from across the region and span both old excavations (for example, those by Christos Tsountas, Dimitris Theocharis and Kostas Gallis, including finds from Argissa, Otzaki Magoula, Achilleio Pharsalon and Platia Magoula Zarkou) and more recent finds (for example from the settlements at Palioskala – **ID1037–1038** – and Makrychori – **ID3977, ID4704**). These



41. Diachronic Museum of Larisa: (a) general view of the Neolithic displays; (b) model of a Neolithic house.
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

cover the entire range of human activity: pottery, tools, figurines (an exceptionally rich collection that covers all periods of Neolithic culture), amulets, stamps and actual burials (for example from Platia Magoula Zarkou). Bone tools are presented in a manner that aims to educate the visitor about their manufacture and their use in the economic life of Neolithic communities. Special emphasis is given to the Neolithic house. A clay fireplace is on display, as are also the model of a Late Neolithic house found under a house floor (Fig. 41b), utensils and furniture that emphasize the symbolic aspects of the ‘house’.

The transition to the section on the Bronze Age is highlighted by the double-sided relief slab, the famous *menhir*, from Souphli Magoula (Fig. 42); key finds of the Early and Middle Bronze Age are included, while Mycenaean culture is mostly represented by the grave goods from the chamber tombs at Megalo Monasteri excavated in the 1970s.

The Iron Age in Thessaly is considered a period of transition and consolidation, a time when populations moved across the region and settled on the plains and the surrounding mountains. It is mostly represented in burials, since settlement remains are sparse. Pottery and metal finds have been chosen to



42. Diachronic Museum of Larisa: general view of the Bronze Age displays and the menhir from Souphli Magoula. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

illustrate the survival of Mycenaean traditions and the influence from western and central Macedonia, but also the distinctive local Protogeometric pottery style and metalwork, such as personal ornaments like spiral bracelets, or 8-shaped iron fibulae.

In the Archaic period Thessaly came to be organized politically into tetrads; power in the cities lay in the hands of members of leading families who possessed large tracts of land cultivated by the indigenous and now landless original inhabitants (the *penestai*). Their wealth came from the exploitation of the agricultural wealth of the plains, animal husbandry and the breeding of horses (also linked to the maintenance of a strong cavalry). The seventh and early sixth centuries BC are not yet fully understood because excavations have focused mostly on sanctuaries, and funerary or domestic finds are few. The display of the finds from two burial sites – the tumuli at Agios Georgios near Krannon (**Fig. 43**) and the finds from the cemetery at Omolio near Tempe (*AR* 58 [2011–2012] 85–86); notable among them is a stamnos with an abecedarium – help to bridge this gap and remind us of common trends across Thessaly (for example by comparing these finds to those from Halos in southeastern Thessaly which are on display in the Volos Archaeological Museum).



43. Diachronic Museum of Larisa: view of the display of material from the tumuli at Agios Georgios, near Krannon. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

Characteristic features of the region are the burial mounds that covered groups of cist graves or sarcophagi and, occasionally, built chamber tombs with pyramidal roofs that imitate earlier monuments; these were used in Archaic and Classical Thessaly as references to a glorious heroic past. Mortuary variability characterizes the region, but an emphasis on kinship is evident both in the arrangement of the tombs and also in the grave markers of the Classical period. The latter constitute one of the most interesting series of grave reliefs outside Attica. Made in local workshops, they betray their artistic influences from the Cycladic islands and the northern Aegean, on the one hand, and, later, Attica, on the other (**Fig. 44**). Although in terms of both style and iconography they conform to the trends of the period, the reliefs display iconographical features that are indicative of Thessalian traditions: men and youths are often shown in full Thessalian dress (the *chitoniskos*, *chlamys*, *petasos* and boots) instead of the *himation* and staff which characterize Attic civic monuments (the latter found in the southern Thessalian cities). Women, especially young ones, are dressed in all their finery; the emphasis on family and motherhood is clear. Among the highlights are the tombstone of Theotimos (**Fig. 45**) who died in the Battle of Tanagra (457 BC) and the stele of a girl from Larisa (**Fig. 44b**). Other sculptural works, for example the mid sixth-century BC Ionic animal frieze from Gremnos and the exquisite statue of an early Severe Style draped youth from Pharsala, allow the visitor to appreciate the local sculptural styles.



44. Diachronic Museum of Larisa: general views of displays of material from the Classical period in Thessaly. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.



45. Diachronic Museum of Larisa: the tombstone of Theotimos from Larisa.
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

Continuous internal strife in Thessaly gave Philip II of Macedonia the opportunity to intervene in Thessalian affairs in 354/3 BC and gain control of the region. Macedonian command of the region was systematic until the early second century BC; the Magnetes (Mount Pelion) and the Perrhaiboi (south and west of Mount Olympos) were fully annexed to Macedonia. On display are epigraphic documents that show the relations between royal power and local communities, such as royal letters. Other areas of the exhibition are devoted to cults, material culture, trade links (pottery and coins) and religion. Among the most important exhibits, I should single out the now famous early second-century BC inscription preserving a sacred law from Marmarone, the ivy-shaped gold lamellae with Orphic/Bacchic texts from Pelinna and the votives to deities with strong local features such as Enodia, Artemis, Poseidon, Hermes Kerdoos.

After the proclamation of freedom from Macedonian rule of the Thessalian cities in 196 BC, the Romans founded the Thessalian Koinon, which encompassed the area from Thessaly to Hypata, except for Perrhaibia and the Magnesians peninsula where two independent koina were established, with limited power and a restricted sphere of influence. During Roman Imperial times, Thessaly was often favoured by Rome, as is shown by the restoration of public buildings, the construction of roads and the placing of *miliaria*, as well as the creation of imperial landholdings. Portraits as well as statuary and artefacts made from *verde antico*, the green stone quarried at nearby Chasambali that was favoured in the Imperial period, are among the most characteristic items displayed. Also highlighted are the major cults of the period:

the Apolline Triad, Asclepius, En(n)odia, Hekate, Poseidon, as well as the Mother of the Gods, Isis and Sarapis. Special emphasis is given to the presentation of the two theatres of Larisa and to the artefacts that inform us about local festivals, in particular the Eleutheria (Liberty Games) which were instituted after 196 BC. Prevalent among the competitions were events that allowed the demonstration of equestrian skill: the bull-hunt (*taurotheria*), the race with riders descending and remounting their horses at a gallop (*aphippodromas*), the torchlight horseback procession (*aphippolampas*), the chariot race (*apobatekos agon*) and the charge (*prosdrome*).

The expansion of Christianity in Thessaly is marked by the abandonment of ancient sanctuaries. A female torso that was reused as a column capital in the fifth-century AD basilica at Kyprou Street in Larisa introduces the visitor to the section on Late Antique and Byzantine Thessaly. A wide range of artefacts is on display, spanning the period to AD 1830. In the Late Antique section Larisa takes pride of place, with finds from the basilica of Agios Achilleios, the city's patron, architectural sculptures from numerous churches and mosaic floors from secular buildings (Fig. 46). Recent excavations across the region (see Sdrolia, this volume) have challenged the perception of the period as one marked by decline; finds from the fortress at Velika on Mount Ossa (see Sdrolia, this volume) and mosaic floors from the Church of Agios Andreas at Elassona are among the highlights. Byzantine art in Thessaly is also represented by finds from Larisa, which was the capital of the Theme of Hellas from the mid tenth century AD, Trikala and the monastic communities on Mount Ossa (Kissavos), the so-called 'Mountain of the Cells'.



46. *Diachronic Museum of Larisa: general views of material in the Late Antique displays.* © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

The rich Ottoman past of Larisa is presented briefly through grave stelae and reliefs from the Hasan Bey mosque; these are set next to Jewish tombstones, wall paintings from secular buildings and a *templon* from Polydendri near Agia, and icons (**Fig. 47**). The aim is to allow the visitor to appreciate the multicultural character of local societies before the formation of the Greek state and the prosperity of the region.

As the intention of the museum is to make the archaeological heritage of Thessaly accessible to visitors, especially children, there are numerous educational programmes as well as exhibitions designed for visitors with special needs.



47. *Diachronic Museum of Larisa: general views of the post-Byzantine displays.* © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Larisa.

The new Archaeological Museum of Kythera

The Archaeological Museum of Kythera reopened to the public on 8 May 2016, after a nine-year period of closure, fully renovated and with a modern new exhibition display. The following account is based on information kindly provided by Kyriaki Psaraki, curator of the museum.

The project, funded by the European Union and ΕΣΠΑ, was implemented by the Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attika, Pireus and Islands, under the general supervision of the Ephor Stella Chryssoulaki. Kyriaki Psaraki was responsible for its museological design and co-ordinated the various teams working on the new exhibition in collaboration with Ioanna Mavroidi.

The Museum of Kythera is housed in a building dating to 1910 that is located at the entrance to the *chora* of Kythera. It was donated to the Ministry of Culture in 1975 by the Kytherian Association and its use as an archaeological museum dates to 1981 (**Fig. 48**).



48. Archaeological Museum of Kythera: view of the exterior. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attika, Piraeus and Islands.

situated at a strategic location and is a passage and safe anchorage for travellers on the Mediterranean Sea, a bridge between Crete, the Peloponnese and the Cyclades, a pirates' den, but also a place of pilgrimage. All these functions are reflected in the artefacts selected for the exhibition. We can single out: the stone tools of the ninth to eighth millennium BC which are the earliest evidence of habitation on the island; the tools and vessels from the Minoan settlement at Kastri; the clay grave offerings from the cemetery of Palaioiopolis that were found during the excavations of Nicholas Coldstream and George Huxley; and the votives from the Minoan peak sanctuary at Agios Georgios sto Vouno, in particular the group of bronze Minoan figurines which constitute the largest assemblage yet discovered in an undisturbed Minoan sanctuary (their excavation undertaken by Ioannis Sakellarakis and, subsequently, Aimilia Banou).

The new exhibition aims to chart a journey through time, beginning in the ninth millennium BC and ending in the third century AD (Fig. 49). The narration develops around the three major axes of human existence: life in a given landscape, ritual practices and death. The aim of the exhibition is to highlight Kythera's cultural identity and to narrate the history of the island against contemporary developments in the Aegean and the eastern Mediterranean.

A total of 665 artefacts are on display. Regardless of their intrinsic or artistic value they reflect the various influences that have contributed to shaping the identity and material culture of the island. Kythera is a gateway to the Greek archipelago; it is



49. Archaeological Museum of Kythera: general views of the displays on Kythera. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attika, Piraeus and Islands.



Noteworthy among the artefacts dating to historical periods are: the votives from the Sanctuary of Athena at Palaiokastros (excavated by Ioannis Petrocheilos), especially the jewellery and figurines, dating from the Geometric to the Hellenistic period; the coin hoard of Hellenistic date from the islet of Antidragonera, discovered by Aris Tsaravopoulos, and, last but not least, the Archaic marble lion of Kythera.



50. Archaeological Museum of Kythera: view of the section on Antikythera. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attika, Piraeus and Islands.



51. Archaeological Museum of Kythera: the display for visitors with special needs. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of West Attika, Piraeus and Islands.

The final section of the exhibition includes a small area dedicated to Antikythera (**Fig. 50**). Its history is told through a selection of finds from various sites across the island and the Kastro, dating from the Neolithic to the Hellenistic period.

The narration is aided by the aesthetic organization of the exhibition; the utilization of the colour blue together with drawings of boats increase the impression that the visitor is on a journey, while the large glass surfaces, the suspension of artefacts on transparent acrylic panels and the scenographic display of depth allow the visitor to visualize the contexts of the artefacts. Digital media are used extensively to aid the viewer; for example, there are two ten-minute documentaries (by George Didimiotis), one near the entrance of the exhibition, presenting the archaeological sites of the island, and the second next to the Archaic lion, presenting the adventures of this emblematic statue since the 19th century AD, when it was still situated in the fort of the Kastro, until its placement in the exhibition. Alongside the exhibits there are planned outreach activities, educational programmes and museum kits for young visitors. In a special section of the exhibition, a Braille guidebook for visitors with restricted vision is available, together with a selected set of artefacts (**Fig. 51**).

The new Archaeological Museum of Thebes

Another new and much-anticipated regional museum, that of Thebes, opened its gates to the public on 7 June 2016. It hosts a striking permanent exhibition that allows the visitor to grasp the wealth of Boeotia and its diachronic importance, from life lived in caves during the Palaeolithic period, through the elaborate Mycenaean palatial complexes of Thebes and Orchomenos with their bureaucratic adminis-

tration and lavish material culture, to the role of Thebes as a leading power in the Classical and Byzantine periods. The following account is based on information kindly provided by Alexandra Charami, Director of the Museum.



52. *Archaeological Museum of Thebes: aerial view.*
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia.

The need for a modern museum, presenting the long history of Thebes and Boeotia, led to the total makeover and expansion of the old museum building (architect Michalis Souvatzidis). The museum's plan and design recall elements of Mycenaean architecture (**Fig. 52**).

The exhibition area of the new Archaeological Museum of Thebes covers an area of 1,000m² and displays diagnostic finds from Thebes and Boeotia from across the ages. The exhibition was redesigned from scratch and incorporates finds from old excavations alongside much more recent ones. It is laid out on various levels that follow the natural contours of the sloping hill of the Kadmeia, arranged around a courtyard and an inner balcony.

The exhibits are organized into 18 thematic units, 11 of which follow a roughly chronological sequence and tell the story of Thebes and Boeotia from the Palaeolithic era to the formation of the modern Greek state (units 3–14). Unique finds, digital installations and texts present Boeotia's history, culture, daily life, politics and social development (**Fig. 53**).

The earliest traces of human activity in Boeotia were found in the Seidi rock-shelter at Haliartos and the Sarakinos cave at Akraiphnio, and date to the Middle Palaeolithic period; after a presentation of the Early Neolithic settlement nuclei (unit 3), there follows a presentation of the more technologically advanced settlements of the Bronze Age (unit 4), succeeded by Late Bronze Age finds from the flourishing Mycenaean palatial centres of Thebes and Orchomenos (unit 5; **Fig. 54**).

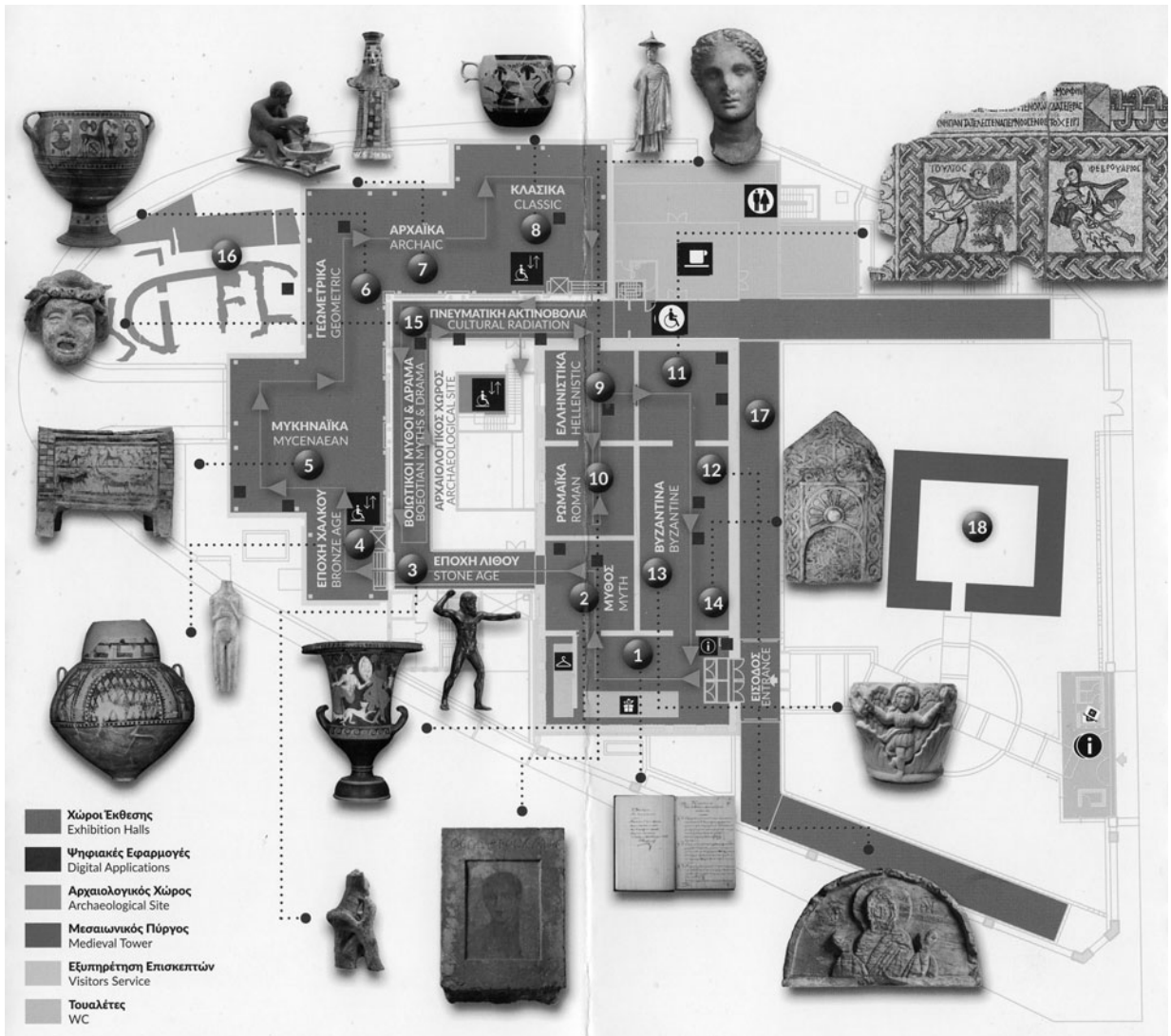
After an inward-looking period of transformation during Protogeometric and Geometric times (unit 6), the Archaic period saw the formation of the Boeotian Koinon (unit 7). The Classical period is characterized by the Theban hegemony (unit 8), while the endless wars of the Hellenistic period weakened the region (unit 9), which gradually became a peripheral power during the Roman period (unit 10).

Boeotia flourished in the Early Byzantine (unit 11) and later Byzantine periods (unit 12) when Thebes was capital of the Theme of Hellas until the mid tenth century AD. During the Late Byzantine era, Boeotia was under Frankish control and belonged to the Duchy of Athens; Thebes was for a short period the capital of the duchy (unit 13). The journey ends with references to the period of Ottoman control leading up to the foundation of the modern Greek state (unit 14).

Special displays tell the stories of archaeological exploration in Boeotia and of the archaeological collections of Thebes (unit 1), the landscape and myths of Boeotia (unit 2) and the cultural life of Boeotia, in particular the tragedies devoted to the Theban mythological cycle (balcony, unit 15). The balcony offers the visitor with limited time the opportunity to bypass units 4–8, while it also allows the visitor with more time to break the chronological sequence of the exhibition and make a detour to visit the roofed archaeological site in the foundations of the new wing of the museum (unit 16). The archaeological site has various prehistoric phases from *ca.* 2,500 to 1,400 BC. Part of the excavations is visible from the main exhibition rooms through a glass frame in unit 6. By ascending the staircase to the balcony, the visitor can follow the rest of the exhibition, from unit 9 to 14.

The museum also has displays in the courtyard (unit 17). Under a roofed peristyle, statues, inscribed bases, altars, votive reliefs, grave stelae and sarcophagi are exhibited, as well as architectural members that offer invaluable information about the history, public and daily life, and artistic output of Boeotia.

Unit 18, the medieval tower of Saint Omer, is testament to the diachronic importance of the city (**Fig. 55**). The tower was built towards the end of the 13th century by Nicholas II of Saint Omer; his family had



53. Archaeological Museum of Thebes: plan, showing the layout of the permanent exhibition in the museum.
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia.



54. Archaeological Museum of Thebes: unit 5 of the museum with finds from Mycenaean Thebes and Orchomenos. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia.



55. Archaeological Museum of Thebes: view of the medieval tower in the museum garden. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Boeotia.

been given control of half of the city of Thebes by the de la Roche dukes. It is the best-preserved part of the medieval fortifications of Thebes. Recent conservation and restoration works on the tower yielded important new finds that are presented in a manner that informs the visitor about the function of the building and of the other towers of the Boeotian countryside. The tower was used until the end of the 19th century AD; on its walls one can still see drawings and graffiti made by prisoners, including counts of the length of their sentences.

The exhibition is accessible to visitors with special needs.

Archaeological Museum of Eleutherna – Homer in Crete

The Archaeological Museum of Eleutherna, the first museum on Crete dedicated to a single site, opened at the ancient site on 19 June 2016. It was the vision of Nikolaos Stampolides, Director of the Eleutherna Excavations, and a fruitful collaboration between the University of Crete and the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. It was implemented under the operational programme ‘Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship 2007–2013’ (ΕΣΠΑ) and received generous support from private donors who saw the project through to completion. There is a very informative and richly illustrated website about the museum (<http://en.mae.com.gr>), on which the following text is based.

Eleutherna is situated in a favourable location on the northwestern foothills of Mount Ida (Psiloritis) at an altitude of *ca.* 380m above sea level, with uninterrupted views to the northern coast of Crete. The site, briefly excavated by Humfry Payne in 1929 for the British School at Athens, has been investigated since 1985 by the University of Crete. These excavations have brought to light important remains of the city and exceptional finds which demonstrate that the site has been inhabited from the Early Bronze Age to modern times. Stampolides’ excavations, especially those in the necropolis at Orthi Petra, have demonstrated that Eleutherna was one of the leading cities on Crete during the Geometric and Archaic periods; the extraordinary finds from his excavations have changed our perception of early Greek art and have significantly increased our understanding of early trade, metalwork, seafaring and, arguably most importantly, Homeric society and values. The city peaked in the early periods, but remains of the Hellenistic and, especially, Late Antique phases are also very important, in particular the basilica of the Archangel Michael.



56. *Archaeological Museum of Eleutherna: general view.*
© N. Stampolides.

The museum, a large building complex of minimalist aesthetic (**Fig. 56**), is integrally linked to its surroundings. The area, designated a landscape of historic significance and natural beauty since the 1960s, is an archaeological park with a grove, outdoor sitting areas, a curved shelter over the necropolis and a stepped shelter over the basilica of the Archangel Michael. It offers the visitor the unique opportunity to learn about the site while strolling through an area of immense beauty whilst also visiting the exhibition spaces in the museum.

The exhibition is at present organized over three successive galleries and houses finds from the Bronze Age to *ca.* AD 1300. At the entrance, a topographical map and audio-visual material introduce the visitor to the site and the history of investigations there. The museum’s emblematic artefact is a bronze shield from the Tomb of the Warriors dating to 830/820–730/720 BC: a very fine piece of early Cretan art and the only shield of this type from a well-stratified context.

Hall A of the museum includes objects chosen to present diachronically the site’s political, religious, social and private arenas. The artefacts – tools, jewellery, weapons, statuary, inscriptions and architectural members – are only a small sample of the finds discovered during the excavations. A central display case is dedicated to gold jewellery, showcasing some of the most exquisite finds of the Geometric period discovered to date, while another display case focuses on imported artefacts, not only from within Crete itself but also from Attica, the Peloponnese, the Cyclades, the eastern Aegean islands,

Asia Minor, the Syro-Palestinian coast and Egypt, revealing Eleutherna's significant place within the trade networks of antiquity.

Hall B is devoted to the presentation of religious life and worship at Eleutherna from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine period. Among the highlights are: a bronze bowl from the Tomb of the Warriors; architectural members and statues from Funerary Monument 4A, possibly a cenotaph, which bore statues of shield-wearing warriors on its roof; and the famous Kore of Eleutherna, whose similarities to the famous Lady of Auxerre in the Louvre betray the Cretan origin of the latter and demonstrate Crete's role in the development of early sculptural styles. Also presented in this room are finds from the Late Antique basilica at Katsivelos.

Hall C showcases the finds from the necropolis at Orthi Petra (Fig. 57). Although some have been presented in previous exhibitions in Athens and abroad, this new exhibition is a unique opportunity to appreciate the mortuary variability at the site, the complexity of funerary rites and the wealth of this community, whose warrior burials bear close resemblances to Homeric descriptions. Among the highlights are: the funerary pyre of a warrior (ΛΛ/90–91 of the late eighth century BC); Building M, which housed the burials of four women of special social status; and the finds from the male cremations inside chamber tomb AK/K1 – the Tomb of the Warriors.



57. Archaeological Museum of Eleutherna: view of the displays in hall C. © N. Stampolidis.

The goal of the museum is to update the exhibits periodically with new finds so as to maintain public interest and reflect the ongoing investigations on the site. It is also envisaged as a centre for the study not only of Eleutherna and Crete, but of Mediterranean culture and history as a whole. Consequently, the southern wing of the museum houses a research centre, managed by the University of Crete, which includes a library, workshops, excavation archives, storerooms and conservation rooms. Alongside the permanent exhibition, temporary thematic exhibitions and conferences are planned in specially designed areas, as well as educational programmes for all educational levels, which, with the use of games and puzzles, will introduce children to the society and Homeric values of early Eleutherna.

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth

On 13 July 2016 at the Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, two refurbished galleries and the twin kouroi of Klenia (**ID 1424**) were revealed to the public. The following account is based on information kindly provided by Socrates Koursoumis, Ancient Corinth Curator.

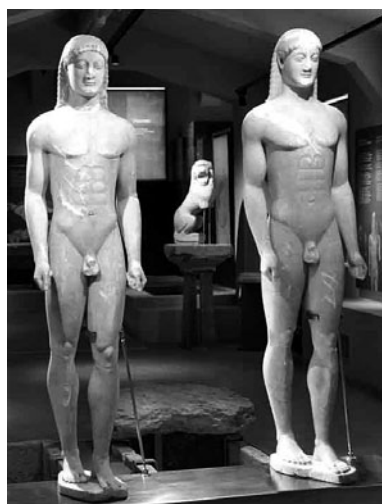
The Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, situated in the centre of the archaeological site of ancient Corinth, is supervised by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia. It is visited by over 160,000 general visitors per year as well as by hundreds of Greek and foreign scholars. The building was designed by the architect W. Stuart Thompson in order to house finds from the excavations at Corinth. Construction commenced in 1931–1932 and was completed 20 years later, under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies. The initial exhibition consisted of four galleries surrounding a central atrium: the prehistoric gallery, housing finds from prehistoric sites of the modern province of Corinthia; the classical gallery, containing selected items from the Geometric, Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods of the city of Corinth; the Asklepieion gallery, in which votive objects from the Sanctuary of Asklepios and the Early Christian cemetery are exhibited; and, finally, the Roman gallery, containing sculpture and mosaics from Roman Corinth and finds from the Early Byzantine and Frankish city, as well as selected objects stolen from the museum in 1990 and repatriated in 2001. The prehistoric and the Asklepieion galleries were refurbished in 2008 under a project funded by the European Union through the Third Community Support Framework.

The transfer of the twin kouroi of Klenia to ancient Corinth in 2010 triggered plans for further refurbishment of the local museum. The confiscation of the looted statues by the Greek authorities in 2010 provoked a rescue excavation at the site of Klenia. The excavation, carried out by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia and directed by the Ephor, Konstantinos Kissas, brought to light the missing fragments of the statues as well as a part of the cemetery of ancient Tenea, in which the two statues stood as burial monuments.

The recent refurbishment project, funded by the European Union and ΕΣΠΑ 2007–2013, focused on the exhibition of the eastern gallery, used until then as a storeroom, and the re-exhibition of the classical (southern) gallery. The initial proposal was approved by the Central Museum Council in 2012 and the project, implemented by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia, was completed in 2016.



58. Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth: general view of the eastern gallery. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia.



59. Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth: the kouroi from Klenia. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia.



60. Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth: the Aetopetra Sphinx. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Corinthia.

With the aim of stressing the importance of the city-state and especially its role in the development of Greek and wider Western civilizations, the design of the new exhibition focuses on the breathtaking landscape that shaped ancient Corinth as well as on references to mythical and historical individuals who are associated with the city and contributed to its grandeur. Three videos showing the Corinthian landscape and its monuments, innovations and achievements, as well as the fall of the city in 146 BC, present to the public a selection of fascinating Corinthian stories, which are generally unknown. After passing through the main entrance of the museum, the visitor enters the eastern gallery (Fig. 58). Acting

as an ancient traveller who walks through the region from north to south, the visitor has the opportunity to take a glimpse at the *komai*, the smaller settlements of the Corinthia (Krommyon, Solygeia, Asai and so on), the prominent sanctuaries of Hera Akraia at Perachora and Poseidon at Isthmia, the Diolkos, a famous paved road used for the transportation of ships across the Isthmus, as well as the two major harbours, Lechaion and Kenchreai. The *kome* of Tenea, probably the largest and greatest in the Corinthia, is represented by an exquisite Archaic sarcophagus and the magnificent kouroi of Klenia (**Fig. 59**), burial monuments that stand in front of two sarcophagi from the homonymous cemetery, with which they are associated. According to the excavator of the site, Konstantinos Kissas, both the kouroi and the sarcophagi are dated to 530–520 BC.

After leaving the cemetery of Tenea, the visitor reaches the outskirts of the city passing through selected burials and burial monuments, such as the Korakou Lion and the Aetopetra Sphinx (**Fig. 60**), situated outside the walls of the city; inside the walled area, the famous Corinthian ‘workshops’ are situated, manufacturing and selling high-quality pottery, terracotta, stone and bronze items. The visitor can also take a glimpse at Corinthian and Greek coins, view a commercial ship transporting amphorae overseas, learn about the foundation of Corinthian colonies in the Mediterranean, such as Syracuse and Corfu, pay a visit to small and larger sanctuaries in the centre of the city and on the slope of Acrocorinth and, finally, admire the great Temple of Apollo. The visitor leaves the religious and political centre of the city viewing aspects of the private lives of Corinthian men, women and children. The final section of the exhibition is a tribute to Corinthian sea and land warfare, and the famous Battle of Leukopetra in 146 BC between the phalanxes of the Achaean League and Roman legions. The battle marked the destruction of the Greek city, its evacuation and abandonment for a hundred years and the Roman refoundation of Corinth as an imperial colony, and here acts as a brief introduction to the Roman gallery.

A dedicated website can be found at <https://www.corinth-museum.gr/en/>

Archaeological Museum of Thermos

On 17 July 2016 the Archaeological Museum of Thermos opened to the public (**Fig. 61**). The project was implemented through co-European Union programmes in two phases, managed by the Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada: the building was completed in 2009 as part of the Third Community Support Framework, while the exhibitions were completed in 2011–2015 under the operational programme ‘Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship 2007–2013’ (ΕΣΠΑ). The following account is based on information kindly provided by Olympia Vikatou, Director of the museum and the Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada.

The Archaeological Museum of Thermos houses finds from one of the most important archaeological sites of western Greece, where human presence has been recorded as far back as the Middle Helladic period (2000–1600 BC). Situated on a well-irrigated plateau in the heart of Aetolia, northeast of lake Trichonis, Thermos was the religious centre of the Aetolians, while from the fourth century BC it was also the seat of the Aetolian League. The permanent exhibition of the museum includes finds that date from prehistoric times to the Roman conquest and originate from the Sanctuary of Apollo Thermios, smaller neighbouring shrines and from member-cities of the Aetolian League.

The exhibition is organized chronologically in six sections: starting with the first traces of habitation at the site, moving to the creation of the Sanctuary of Apollo, the transformation of the site into the religious and political centre of the Aetolian League and, finally, its decline. Complementing the archae-



61. Archaeological Museum of Thermos: general exterior view.
© Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada.

ological finds are texts, panels, drawings and reconstructions, digital media and texts in Braille. Education programmes and interactive materials are available in a separate gallery.

Following a brief digital journey through the landscape and natural environment of Aetolia (unit 1), aided by aerial photographs and a plan of the museum, the visitor learns about the prehistoric settlement (1700–1100/1050 BC) through the finds. At this time, the most important building was the apsidal Megaron A, the seat of the local chief. The settlement was a meeting place for all Aetolians, being situated at the crossroads between the mountains and the plains of Aetolia. Around the middle of the second millennium BC it came under the influence of Mycenaean culture, but it apparently never became a strong administrative centre of a palatial type. The finds inform the visitor about the agropastoral character of the settlement, daily life and activities such as hunting, war, the few traces of cult, the architectural development of its buildings and local and imported pottery (Fig. 62), the latter characterized by a variety of shapes and decorative motifs. The finds date from *ca.* 1500 BC to the final destruction of the settlement in about 1100–1050 BC (unit 2).



62. Archaeological Museum of Thermos: vessels from the prehistoric settlement of Thermos, showing two pottery categories – handmade local pottery, 1600–1200 BC, and matt-painted pottery continuing the Middle Helladic tradition, *ca.* mid second millennium BC. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada.

In the Early Iron Age settlement, Megaron B was the dominant structure and the beginnings of the cult of Apollo can be traced to the eighth century BC. A new category of matt-painted pottery can be linked to the foundation of the new settlement, revealing influences from the cultural horizon of north-western Greece. Contacts with southern Greece cease and most influences are from Epirus and western Macedonia. Numerous bronze and iron votives, linked to the cult of Apollo, were discovered in the ash altar that succeeded Megaron B, and these are the remnants of destruction events which took place mostly during periods of crisis or war. Noteworthy among them are the bronze horse, rider and male figurines, which must have been gifts from leading members of local society (unit 3).

In unit 4 the visitor can appreciate the rich architectural ornamentation of the temples of Apollo Thermios and Apollo Lyseios, as well that of other unidentified sanctuary buildings (dating from the end of the seventh to the second century BC). At the end of the seventh century BC, when Thermos began to play the role of a Panaitolian sanctuary with a regional character, the conditions were set for the erection of monumental cult buildings. Particular emphasis is given to the display of the two roofs of the Temple

of Apollo Thermios and the painted metopes, which are some of the earliest monumental paintings from the ancient Greek world (Fig. 63). This gallery also includes finds from two smaller shrines near Thermos, at Taxiarches and Chrysovitsa.

Grave goods from the cemeteries of Aetolian cities reveal the luxurious lifestyle of their inhabitants, their taste for the good life and their sophistication. It thus becomes clear that the negative image presented about them in literary sources was deliberate and politically motivated; the Athenian historian Thucydides characterizes their lifestyle and customs as barbarian (unit 5).

The end of the fourth to the early third century BC was the period when the buildings in the agora of the Koinon were built: three monumental stoas, the so-called bouleuterion and two fountain houses. They form a monumental complex and mark the transformation of the early sanctuary into the federal religious and political centre of the Aetolian Koinon, when the sanctuary and the agora were integrally linked. Emphasis is placed on the constitution of the Confederacy. The exhibition concludes with a reference to the decline and fall of the Aetolian League after the successive plundering of the sanctuary by Philip V in 218 and 206 BC, and the gradual abandonment of the site after the Battle of Pydna in 167 BC (unit 6).

A published catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Temporary exhibitions in 2015–2016

In addition to the opening of the new museums noted above, the past year has seen both the participation of Greek museums in overseas exhibitions and the organization of a plethora of local temporary exhibitions. I note only a few of these here.

The country's first museum, the **National Archaeological Museum at Athens** celebrated in 2016 the 150th anniversary of its foundation. In the run up to this important anniversary, a series of events and exhibitions has been organized over the past 12 months. First was a temporary exhibition titled '*A Dream Among Splendid Ruins... Strolling through the Athens of Travellers, 17th–19th Century*' (8 September 2015 to 24 July 2016, with a printed catalogue). It was designed to offer the visitor an imaginary stroll around the monuments of Athens during the era of the Grand Tour. The exhibition was designed in collaboration with the Hellenic Parliament Library and included original works from the museum, some displayed for the first time, alongside illustrated editions, paintings and engravings that helped reconstruct the landscape of Athens in that period (Fig. 64). As its Director, Maria Lagogianni, notes:

The European travellers visiting Athens and other classical sites were instrumental to the intensification of the study of antiquity but also to the formation of archaeological museum and collections... Integrated into the same context is the formation of the first private archaeological collections and archaeological museums in Europe, as well as the dark side of travelling – the 'mania' for antiquities



63. Archaeological Museum of Thermos: reconstruction of the Early Classical roof of the Temple of Apollo Thermios (470–460 BC). © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of Aetolia-Acarnania and Lefkada.



64. National Archaeological Museum at Athens: a view of the exhibition '*A Dream Among Splendid Ruins... Strolling through the Athens of Travellers, 17th–19th Century*'. © National Archaeological Museum at Athens and Maria Lagogianni.

and their plundering – both of which increased the awareness of the newly-formed Greek state and led to the establishment of a national policy for the protection of antiquities and creation of an archaeological museum.

Another successful programme of the museum – the ‘**Unseen Museum**’ – has involved the presentation to the public of formerly unseen artefacts. Examples of displayed objects include: a first-century AD terracotta group of three figures occupied with a board game (EAM4200); a basalt head of Arsinoe II (Γ5796); and the 16th-century BC silver ‘krater of the battle’ from Mycenae, unearthed by Heinrich Schliemann in November 1876 (NAM 605–607). Equally popular has been the redesign of the museum’s garden, which reopened to the public in June 2016; around 700 new plants have been planted in the atrium in accordance with a design by the architect Antonis Skordilis, creating mini-gardens containing plants that are associated with Greek mythology.

The major celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Museum began on 3 October 2016, with the opening of a major temporary exhibition – ‘**Odysseys**’ – which will narrate the adventurous journeys of man through time, along the axes of ‘the journey’, ‘Ithacas’ and ‘Exodus’; it is expected to remain on display for a year (http://www.namuseum.gr/museum/pressreleases/2016/pressrelease_ODYSSEYS16-en.html).

In 2015 the **Acropolis Museum** inaugurated a series of temporary exhibitions from major archaeological sites of the Greek periphery with the aim of making this material accessible to a wider public, while at the same time urging viewers to visit these distant areas. The first exhibition (20 June 2015 to 10 January 2016) was dedicated to the island of Samothrace (‘**Samothrace. The Mysteries of the Great Gods**’) and was a collaboration with the Ephorates of Antiquities of Evros and Rodope. Through 252 exhibits from Samothrace it allowed the visitor to learn about the Mysteries at the site and the importance of the island. The most recent investigations on the island were discussed at a day conference. The second exhibition, ‘**Dodona, the Oracle of Sounds**’, was inaugurated in June 2016 and will remain open until 10 January 2017. It includes loans from the Karapanos Collection of the National Archaeological Museum and the Ioannina Archaeological Museum. The emphasis is on Zeus and his cult at Dodona and on presenting the importance of the oracle for pilgrims. In the centre of the gallery an oak tree alludes to the prophetic oak tree of the oracle. Among the most characteristic objects on display are the inscribed lead tablets which bore questions posed by visitors; they concern matters of law, fertility, health, debts and family. Also important are the bronze votives; parts of armour, metal vessels and bronze statuettes offer the visitor the opportunity to grasp the interregional significance of the sanctuary and its wealth, especially during the reign of Pyrrhos. A published catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

The **Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki** and its Director, Polyxeni Adam-Veleni, have been highly proactive in organizing exhibitions and events that entice members of the public to the museum. In the past 12 months two exhibitions have been organized there. The first was entitled ‘**DNA, Window to the Past and the Future**’ and opened in July 2015. It focused on explaining the methods used in bioarchaeology and included relevant finds from prehistoric sites in Thessaloniki, Pieria and Kozani, as well as audio-visual material. The exhibition spaces were transformed into a laboratory, an idea that proved very popular among young visitors. The second exhibition, ‘**Rhaidestos-Thessaloniki, Antiquities in a Refugee Journey**’, was inaugurated on 2 March 2016 and will remain on view until 31 January 2017. It narrates the history and the memories of the Greeks who once lived in eastern Thrace through antiquities that have been collected since 1871 by the Educational Society of Thrace (Θρακικός Φιλεκπαιδευτικός Σύλλογος); in 1922 the collection was transferred to Thessaloniki. The items cover the period from the sixth century BC to the fourth century AD. A published catalogue accompanies the exhibition.

Moving to more peripheral sites but remaining in Macedonia, the exhibition ‘**Before the Great Capital**’ opened at **Pella** on 6 March 2016. It contains five sections tracing the history of the site from prehistoric times to its foundation as a capital of the Macedonian Kingdom. The first section focuses on the presentation of the geomorphological changes in the area, whereas the others follow a chronological sequence. Emphasis is given to the finds from Archontiko, which seems to have been a major centre in the region before Pella’s foundation.

In Epirus, the **Archaeological Museum of Ioannina** hosted the exhibition ‘**Archaeology of the Ioannina Basin: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity**’, which opened its doors on 22 July 2016. Its goal was to present recent finds from the region (for example from the acropoleis at Gardiki and Kastritsa or the settlement at the site of Kastro Ioanninon) and to highlight the diachronic importance of the basin of Ioannina (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7RBtaSd2eh4> for an hour-long tour of the exhibition).

In **Arta**, a temporary exhibition titled ‘**Ambrakia, The New Archaeological Finds**’ was organized at the city’s archaeological museum (from 8 March to 31 May 2016), displaying unpublished and unknown recent finds from the region that date from the Archaic to the Hellenistic period. A series of seminars given by archaeologists working in the region allowed the community to learn about the new discoveries and appreciate their significance (<http://efaart.gr/2016/03/07/αμβρακία-τα-νεώτερα-ανασκαφικά-ευρήματα-2/>).

In Thessaly, at **Trikala**, a temporary exhibition devoted to the presentation of the recent finds from the excavations conducted during construction of the Central Greece Road E65 was organized in summer 2016 (June to the end of July) in the Kurşum Mosque. It allowed the public a glimpse of the finds from unknown sites such as the Early and Middle Bronze Age site at Palaiopyrgos Trikalon, the large quarry at Krenitsa Trikalon, the Middle Byzantine cemetery at Kokkinovrachos near Anavra Karditsas and the post-Byzantine industrial, tile-producing complex at Kastraki Kalambakas.

Also in the summer, temporary exhibitions opened on **Crete**. In **Chania**, the Archaeological Museum of the city houses an exhibition (until January 2016) that traces the history of the museum from the 19th century onwards. In **Rethymnon**, the 16th-century AD Church of St Francis houses the temporary archaeological exhibition of the Archaeological Museum of Rethymnon, with a diachronic display of finds from key sites in the region. These trace the history of the area from prehistoric times to the period of Venetian control.

Last, but definitely not least, is the exhibition ‘**Vanity, Stories of Jewellery in the Cyclades**’ which was inaugurated on 10 August 2016 in the restored **Archaeological Museum of Mykonos**. It is a collaboration between the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades and the municipality of Mykonos. In a very modern and minimalist display (**Fig. 65**), the exhibition showcases representative ancient, and often unknown, jewellery and ornaments from 19 Cycladic islands as well as the creations of 12 modern Greek artists, covering a period from the Neolithic to the modern day. The exhibition includes loans from numerous public museums (for example the cross of Manto Mavrogenous, a legendary figure of the War of Independence, from the Byzantine Museum in Athens), as well as a few selected paintings and icons. After a year on Mykonos, the show will travel to other Cycladic museums (<http://observer.com/2016/08/modern-and-ancient-greek-jewelers-are-the-focus-of-a-new-mykonos-exhibit/>).



65. Archaeological Museum of Mykonos: views of the exhibition ‘*Vanity, Stories of Jewellery in the Cyclades*’. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports: Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades.

Archaeological sites/monuments

Although the focus of this article is new museums and exhibitions, a few archaeological sites warrant mention here. The Bronze Age ‘**Palace of Nestor**’ reopened on 12 June 2016 after three years of closure for restoration works. Situated about 18km from modern **Pylos**, it is the best-preserved Mycenaean palace in Greece. The restoration saw the construction of a new shelter, a new navigation infrastructure and access for visitors with special needs.

In Thessaly, the large **ancient theatre of Larisa**, at the foot of the acropolis hill Phrourio, has been open to the public since 1 April 2016 (<http://www.larissa-theatre.com>). In Macedonia, the Macedonian tombs at ancient Mieza, modern **Lefkadia**, became accessible to the public once again and, at **Pella**, the Macedonian capital, the multi-chambered rock-cut tomb found in 2005 (**ID372**) is now open (https://www.pella-museum.gr/explore/archaeological_site/dead_city_of_pelle/ellinistiko_nekrotafeio/polithalamos_tafos#). The tomb is unique in mainland Greece both for its size and for the number of chambers. Used for successive burials from the late fourth to the second century BC, it recalls similar structures in Ptolemaic Egypt and at other sites.

Among important Byzantine sites I should single out here the **Church of Transfiguration** (Metamorfosis Sotiros) at **Christianoi Triphylias**, one of the most imposing Byzantine monuments in Greece which dates back to the 11th century AD. The architectural ornamentation of the building, its mosaics and wall paintings have been restored, as has the adjacent building to the west, which must have been the bishop’s residence. In Emathia, besides the works at the palace of **Aigai** and the preparation of the new museum at the archaeological site of Aigai, I note the first guided tour and opening, on 4 July 2016, of the **Old Metropolis of Beroia**, which recent work has revealed was consecrated to the Theotokos. The impressive three-aisled basilica, which had been transformed into a mosque, has been restored and the southern aisle has been turned into an exhibition area for the display of finds from excavations at the site. The exhibition will allow the visitor to trace the history and numerous building phases of the monument and, in addition, to see the exquisite architectural members of the Sanctuary of Dionysos; these preserve manumission inscriptions and were later reused in the Byzantine church. They offer rare insights into the society of Beroia in Imperial times. The findings from the work of the ephorate were presented at a day conference on 28 June 2016 at the New Museum of Aigai (<https://www.aigai.gr/el/news/proti-xenagisi-stin-palaia-mitropoli-veroias-0>).

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